

LITERARY NOTES.

'Charles Lamb had not too high an opinion of Byron and his writings. "I never relished his lordship's mind," he wrote in a letter which has just been sold in London. "Why, a line of Wordsworth's is a lever to lift the immortal spirit. Byron's can only move the spleen. He is at best a satirist; in any other way he was mean enough. I dare say I do him injustice, but I cannot love him nor squeeze a tear to his memory."

To that class of the population in the East which supposes that all is crudeness and want of culture west of the Alleghanies, it will be a matter of surprise to learn that a valuable collection of books relating to Daniel has been put up for sale by Anton Bicker in Cincinnati. The library includes nearly two hundred numbers, and besides the English translations, which are indispensable to every American gentleman's library, contains all the best German translations and commentaries, the costly Dutch version of Dr. Hacke, and the last and best Dutch translation, that of Joachim Boel, Scaramuzza's illustrations of the Divine Comedy, without which one cannot hope to complete a study of the art of the rarer imitations of Petrus Alphelius' Latin commentary by Lord Vernon has made at Florence; a fair collection of translations and comments on the minor poems; Lord Vernon's and A. Paizzi's reprint of the first quarto edition of the Divine Comedy; the exposition of Launcion; the Bembo edition; a copy of the original Crusca edition; and one of "Doll' Ancora" are notable features of the library. Mr. Bicker naturally desires to sell the collection entire if it is possible to do so before May 1. If he does not succeed in doing that, the numbers will be sold separately.

The only portion of General Gordon's chronicle of the siege of Khartoum which has yet reached his family is the sixth volume, covering the period from the 5th of November to the 14th of December. The five previous volumes, which deal with events between the 10th September and the 4th November, have not yet come to hand. Publication will be deferred until the whole are received.

Many columns of amiable newspapers are occupied just now by Mr. Donnelly's dissertations on his discovery that "Bacon wrote Shakespeare." More foolishness than his arguments and citations reveal it would be hard to find.

Mrs. Lytton Liston will shortly bring out a new novel, "The Autobiography of Christopher Kirkland."

The Boston Herald says: "There is a statement of the way in which Mr. Howells' novel, 'The Rise of Silas Lapham,' came to be written which may be of interest to a public. A gentleman who is in a good position to observe the general taste of the public in literature said to Mr. Howells one day: 'You have been treating the love experiences of young people successfully for a long time, and readers are far from being tired of your work in that direction. But wouldn't it be well to vary it occasionally? Why not write a story of which a business man shall be the central figure?'

Mr. A. P. Sinnett, author of "The Occult World" and of "Eoteric Buddhism," is about to publish a novel called "Karma." The story is to have incidents of an "occult" character.

Mr. Edmund Gosse is going to write the masque which is to be performed at the royal costume ball of the Institute of Painters in Water Colors in London on the 19th of May.

The title of Miss Blanche Willis Howard's new novel is to be "Aunay Tower." It will be published by J. R. Osgood & Co. about the first week in May.

The second volume of Professor McMasters' "History of the People of the United States" will be out in a few weeks.

There is in *The Catholic World* an amusing and practical little "Talk with Contributors" which should be read by all aspiring writers. The following story conveys instruction to a large class of discontented people: "There was an undergraduate once, of our acquaintance, who was the envy of all his class-fellows because he had the intoxicating privilege of contributing occasional leaders to a 'great daily.' How he used to polish those articles till they shone like statuettes of Parian marble! He was reading his proofs in the office one evening when the editor, dropping in, said in a cruelly caustic voice: 'That article of yours makes a column and a half, and there's only three-quarters of a column open.' Pendenents looked up in dismay. 'What's to be done now?' 'A very simple and direct thing,' says the scribe. 'Give me that proof. And when I have polished it, I'll add two big scrapes of his blue pencil he had the article hacked down to half its size. 'But it is ruined—mutilated—symbolically destroyed!' cries out the horrified parent. 'My dear fellow, you would be astonished,' Procerates says, whistling through the speaking-tube for the foreman—you would be astonished if you knew the number of people who will read that article in the morning and eat their breakfast with good digestions! It was a bitter lesson, but one that the young man remembered."

Walter Rye wrote to *The Academy* that Carlyle's *forte* was not in weighing evidence—that anything that fitted in with his views was welcomed and worked into narrative. Sir Henry Taylor said of the old Scotchman that "he can see nothing but the chaos of his own mind reflected in the universe."

The May number of *The Century* will not appear until the first day of May—and the magazine will thereafter always be presented to the public on the first day of the month named on its cover. The last half-yearly volume has just been issued and is in most respects an admirable collection, although not beyond criticism.

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